CAMP MAY WATERLINE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

Los Alamos County, New Mexico, proposes to construct a water conveyance system that would allow for snow-making at the Pajarito Mountain Ski Area, west of Los Alamos, plus enhance fire suppression capabilities. The conveyance system would also replace the inadequate domestic water supply at Pajarito Mountain Ski Area, which currently depends on a shallow well. In addition to the pipeline between the existing Pajarito 4 Tank (P4T) on West Road and Camp May Tank at Pajarito Ski Area, the project would include the installation of another new tank next to the existing P4 tank, plus four booster pump stations along the pipeline route. The project area is on U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and private land.

LOCATION

The Camp May Waterline project is located west of Los Alamos, New Mexico. The project area extends from the existing P4T site along West Road, to Ski Hill Road, including some premises in the Pajarito Mountain Ski Area (see Figures 1 and 2). Most of the project area is located on Santa Fe National Forest, with a small portion of the pipeline on DOE land and private land. The P4T tank site is on an easement DOE granted the County for water-system-related use. While at the other end of the proposed pipeline, the Camp May Tank is a non-potable water tank owned by Los Alamos County, located within a Parajito Mountain Ski Area-granted easement. The pipeline would traverse a large area of land under the jurisdiction of USFS.

PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT

The purpose of the Camp May Waterline Project is to convey potable water to the Pajarito Mountain Ski Area from the Los Alamos County municipal supply system. The additional water will be the source for supplemental snow making for recreational purposes, replace the current inadequate domestic water supply at Pajarito Mountain, and enhance the ski basin's fire suppression capabilities.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is for construction, operations, and maintenance of all necessary improvements, which would include the new water tank, pipeline and four booster pump stations. The proposed new 250,000-gallon tank and Booster Pump Station (BPS) #1 would be installed on land under DOE jurisdiction, next to the existing County-owned P4T tank. The pipeline would be installed along West Road and Ski Hill Road. The elevation change between the P4T site and the end of the proposed pipeline at the County-owned Camp May Tank is approximately 1,800 feet, and the energy necessary to overcome this vertical head distance (including friction losses in the pipeline) would be generated by four booster pump stations along the pipeline alignment.

The project would affect a total of 11.31 acres (see Figures 1 and 2). Of these, 9.13 acres would be on USFS land, 1.74 acres on DOE land, 0.24 acres on private land, and 0.2 acres on County right of way. The pipeline corridor extends westward approximately 24,632 feet long starting at

the P4T site, along a 20-foot wide strip, the majority of it along east-west Ski Hill Road. From booster pump station #2 through #4, the pipeline would be placed along the road shoulder.

The overall project concept includes the following criteria:

- The proposed new water tank with a capacity to store 250,000 gallons would be installed within the existing P4T site. This new tank will provide water for water transfer operations between P4T and Camp May Tank.
- A 6-inch waterline would be installed underground with a minimum 4-foot cover from the new tank at the P4T site to the Camp May Tank at Pajarito Mountain Ski Area. Water pipeline alignment would be primarily outside the pavement strip north of West Road's and Ski Hill Road's westbound lanes.
- 4 booster pump stations would be installed, each pumping one-fourth of the total head differential. Booster station #1 would be installed next to the new tank at P4T. The other three would be installed alongside the pavement on Ski Hill Road.
- Pumps would operate in series (suction-to-discharge connection, and each pump would deliver 250 gallons per minute, thus allowing the system to transfer approximately 250,000 gallons per day from the P4T to the Camp May Tank.

The P4T site would be able to accommodate the proposed new 250,000-gallon tank and BPS#1 within the boundaries of the easement originally granted to the County for the operation of P4T. The conveyance pipeline would begin at the discharge end of BPS #1, and would first run along West Road, for approximately 2,530 lineal feet. The pipeline alignment would then follow Ski Hill Road, alongside the eastbound lane for approximately 1,600 lineal feet. The alignment would then shift about 5 feet outside the pavement and extend about 1,350 lineal for the remainder of the run to BPS #2. BPS #3 would be installed another 5,300 lineal feet up the road from BPS #2. The alignment would extend another 5,850 lineal feet before reaching BPS #4. The pipeline would continue along Ski Hill Road another 3,850 lineal feet, at which point it would extend along the northern edge of the unpaved parking lot for approximately 2,350 lineal feet. At the end of the parking lot run, the pipeline would run southward along the ski run to a point where it would bifurcate, so that water can be later delivered into the Camp May Tank and the potable storage tank owned by Parajito Mountain Ski Area (See Figure 1). The pipeline installation would use conventional methods of open trenching. The trench would vary between 3 and 8 feet, depending on subsurface conditions. Some rock excavation is anticipated and minimal clearing and grading would be required for booster pump station installation. Construction staging/laydown areas would be established in disturbed areas of the booster station sites.

In addition to the new 250,000-gallon water tank at the P4T site, the project would include freeze protection improvements on the existing County-owned Camp May Tank, as well as a service line for potable water to reach the Parajito Mountain Ski Area-owned 75,000-gallon tank. The main pipeline would connect to existing 8-inch pipeline, and discharge into the 250,000-gallon Camp May Tank. Currently, the Camp May Tank is a non-potable water tank that allows for the pumping of shallow groundwater and snowmelt up to the existing 10 million-gallon pond atop the ski runs. The new water would supplement the non-potable supply, and no modifications to the pond are proposed.

The new booster pumps would operate up to 24 hours a day, at least five months of the year. These pumps would be enclosed in an insulated block pump house, which would also help mitigate any potential noise impacts. The pumps would be barely audible (less than 30 decibels outside the pump house) to users of the Ski Hill Road.

Low visual impact design would be used for all pump houses and tanks, including green or brown coloring to blend in with the surrounding landscape. Best Management Practices would be used to minimize erosion and sediment transport, such as mulch socks and filter fences. Any disturbed soils around structures and pipeline trench backfill would be recontoured and seeded with approved seed mixes.

Construction activities would last 6 to 9 months. Ski Hill Road would be kept open to traffic during construction, with adequate safety and traffic control measures to protect road users as well as construction personnel and equipment. Some trenching on rock is anticipated and it would be performed by conventional means, such as using graders and back-hoes, as well as explosives. Adequate safety measures and best management practices will be used in trenching operations. A biological survey of the project area, including nest surveys, will be conducted prior to construction. Evaluations will be conducted to determine the presence of species protected under the Endangered Species Act, including the Jemez Mountains salamander and Mexican spotted owl. Only limited tree cutting within the project area limits would occur, and tree cutting operations would take place outside the migratory bird nesting season (April 1 to August 30). Vegetation clearance would be limited to the new tank installation needs, as well as the new booster pump station sites. The pipeline would be installed in cleared areas along existing roads.

Relationship to Planning

An environmental assessment will be prepared for this proposed action according to guidelines under the National Environmental Policy Act. The Los Alamos County would operate under a Special Use Permit with the Forest Service. DOE will enter into real estate agreement with the County for the waterline and tank installed on DOE property. Permit coverage would also be obtained under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's General Construction Permit under the Clean Water Act. As part of the permit, a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) would be prepared. The SWPPP would include best management practices.

Consultation with others

Consultation with area Pueblos will occur. There will be a public meeting on March 1, 2018 to introduce the project and solicit comments and concerns from the public. Public comments will be received during the scoping period between February 16 and March 16. Issues and alternatives from those comments will be analyzed in the Environmental Assessment (EA). When this analysis is complete, the EA will be available for public comment for another 30 days. The final EA and draft decision will be available for a 45 day objection period for those who have submitted substantive comments during the previous two comment periods.